The World

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THE TICKET EXTORTION.

Improvident persons and those lacking in energy who did not think or care to stand in line before the Metropolitan Opera-House from 4 o'clock in the morning of the day set for the sale of the "Parsifal" seats are notified that the choicest seats in the house may be obtained from ticket dealers.

Those desiring orchestra seats may procure the tickets for $14 and in some cases for $12. Is not the extra $2 or $4 asked a small fee in view of the amount of annoyance and physical fatigue and nerve strain which the speculator has considerately saved the purchaser?

Mr. Conried is credited with a desire to be perfectly fair and just to the public. He encouraged the reservation of seats by mail. But the fact remains that the best seats are in the hands of speculators, many of those who endured the ordeal of the long and exhausting wait in line reaching the box-office only to suffer disappointment.

The conditions of securing tickets for a popular theatrical or operatic attraction seem now to have resolved themselves into the alternative of paying the speculator's extra price or risking the chance of failure after a physically prostrating siege of the box-office. It is a cruel alternative. But it is offered so periodically, when any performance of unusual interest is advertised, when Irving comes or Maude Adams begins an engagement or "Parsifal" is announced, that it has come to be the regular experience.

With managers countenancing him either as the result of helplessness or complicity the ticket speculator waxes rich in ill-gotten profits as he grows in popular discstcem.

TOO MANY CHILDREN?

In the course of a very comprehensive survey of society, ranging from Pericles to J. P. Morgan and including thoughts on imperialism, education and national honor, Dr. E. Benjamin Andrews, Chancellor of the University of Nebraska, takes occasion to raise the race suicide issue anew.

Dr. Andrews thinks that President Roosevelt has done "incalculable evil" by his advocacy of larger families. The President's recommendations are alleged to have accomplished an undesirable end by swelling the census among the poor and thoughtless. Mr. Roosevelt is asked to amend his plea by urging quality of population as more a desideratum than quantity.

Where Mr. Andrews has obtained his statistics of an abnormal increase of the birth rate among the poor is not apparent. But granting the truth of his observations, what is to constitute "quality" in children?

Is it not as likely to exist in the thirteenth child of a lighthouse keeper as in a boy born to wealth? How was its presence to be detected in the ploughman's son, Burns, the dull schoolboy, not to say dunce? Or in Farragut, the truant who quarrelled and swore and smoked and at sixteen was a reproach to his family? Or in Frederick Douglass, the negro boy who slept in a gunnysack?

If the number of children in a family is to be regulated by the size of the household income the world's crop of geniuses must speedily run short. We can then look for no more barefooted Barnums or poor blacksmith's sons like Faraday. There will be no Linnaeus to fill the holes in his shoes with paper. If the poor are to be denied the privilege of having as many children as they wish we must look for a deterioration of national greatness.

For it is from among the baker's dozen of children in a tenement that we are more likely to get a great name than from the single child of the well-to-do home. Dr. Andrews's alarm will not be generally shared.

THE GAMBLING MANIA.

Official figures from France recently give us a concrete idea of the enormous aggregate of money spent in betting on the races. The amount invested in paris mutuels in twelve years was $480,000,000. In a single year, 1899, the total of betting transactions was $51,000,000.

The figures stagger. Yet the disclosures of the receipts of policy games resulting from the arrests made by Goddard Society agents on the east side within a week show from this petty form of gambling a daily return of profits surprisingly large.

The detectives found a policy backer counting up receipts of $297 for the morning drawing, out of which only $15 had been allotted to winners. From the two daily drawings the game was paying $500 a day. The figures seem small by comparison. But as the returns for a limited area they point to an enormous aggregate of gains for policy sharks from the entire city and explain the millions amassed by Al Adams.

These profits are wrung from the very poor and represent dimes and nickels and dollars diverted from household needs. They are the evil harvest of swindling in its most derpicable form.

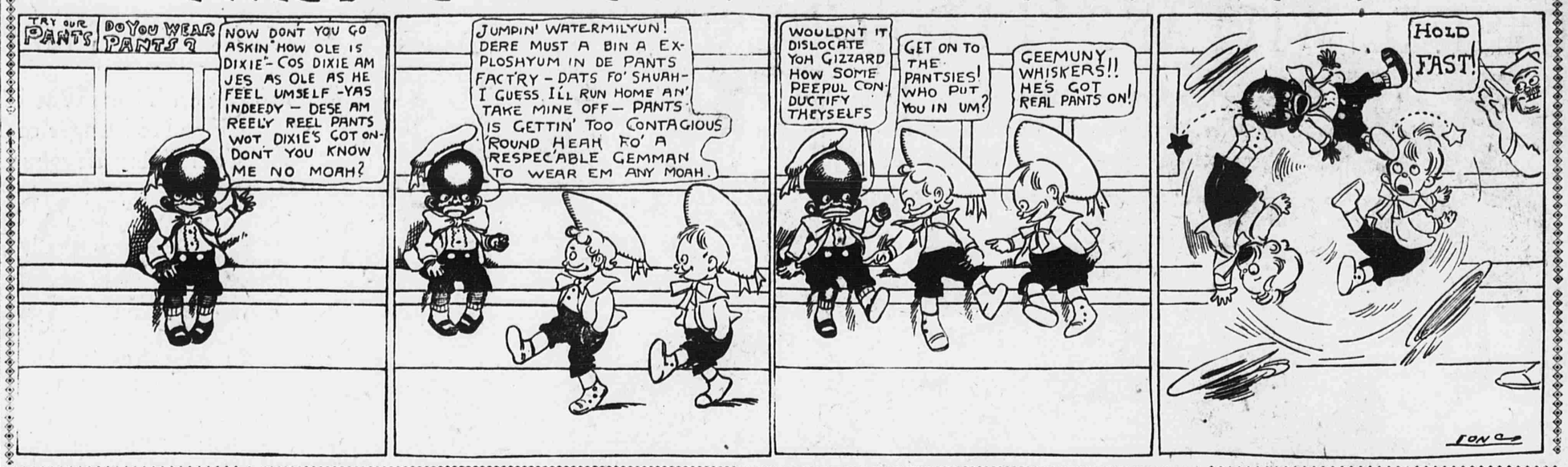
DIET AND DIVORCE.

Senator Pettus thinks we eat too much gravy. Mrs. Rorer warns against too many eggs. A wealthy New Jersey woman, persuaded of the sovereign efficacy of a vegetarian diet and opposed to the sacrifice of animals for food, seeks to assure a painless death for her herds by anticipating the butcher's knife with chloroform. So many men, so many minds. The ancient proverb applies with peculiar aptness to modern dietary views.

Mrs. Rorer's theory is particularly interesting because it has points in common with the old belief of the direct influence of food on the human temperament. "Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed that he is grown so great?" Lions' hearts, wild boar steak and wolves' tongues for the valiant according to the theory that if a man ate rabbit flesh he grew timid. And so on drinking, claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes.

The influence of the egg, according to Mrs. Rorer, is to promote divorce, because, weighing heavily on the digestive organs and taxing them too severely if eaten day after day, it first induces lassitude, then irritability, domestic discord and the services of court counsel. The prohibitive prices at which eggs are now sold will doubtless show immediate results in a diminution of the divorce court calendar.

LITTLE DIXIE---The Coon Kid Puts on His First Pair of Pants.



"We Swore Eternal Love," Says Maurice.

By Nixola Greeley-Smith.

"WE swore eternal love," says Maurice in the charming little French comedy of "A Farewell Supper," at the vaudeville theatre, "and promised each other that the moment we fell in love with some one else we would confess it frankly."

The speech, shallow and cynical though it be, is typical of New York, as well as of Paris, where it originated.

For in these days of rapid-fire courtship, ten-minute marriages and divorce-while-you-don't-wait, constancy has not even a back seat among the virtues held in modern esteem.

Time was when men and women prided themselves upon fidelity. A man won the one woman and was true to her all his days, or, failing to win her, thought that it was better to have lost her than to have gained any other. In dreams he might behold her, still fair and kind and young, and see the thick puffs of his after-dinner cigar, the solace of his bachelorhood, wreath themselves into so many haloes of his old ideal. Women, too, prided themselves upon loving once and forever. Among our grandmothers a young woman lost social cast by breaking her engagement even for very serious reasons, and a divorced man or woman was a person to be shunned by all righteous members of society.

It is not the purpose of this article to sing the praises of a past age. However fast and frivolous the present generation of vipers may seem to older and wiser serpents, any one who belongs to it may be pardoned for not wishing to be her grandmother or even like her.

But to the unprejudiced mind it is apparent that constancy, a virtue quite as important to ourselves as to those who love us, is not the all-important requisite in a lover that it was thought to be fifty years ago.

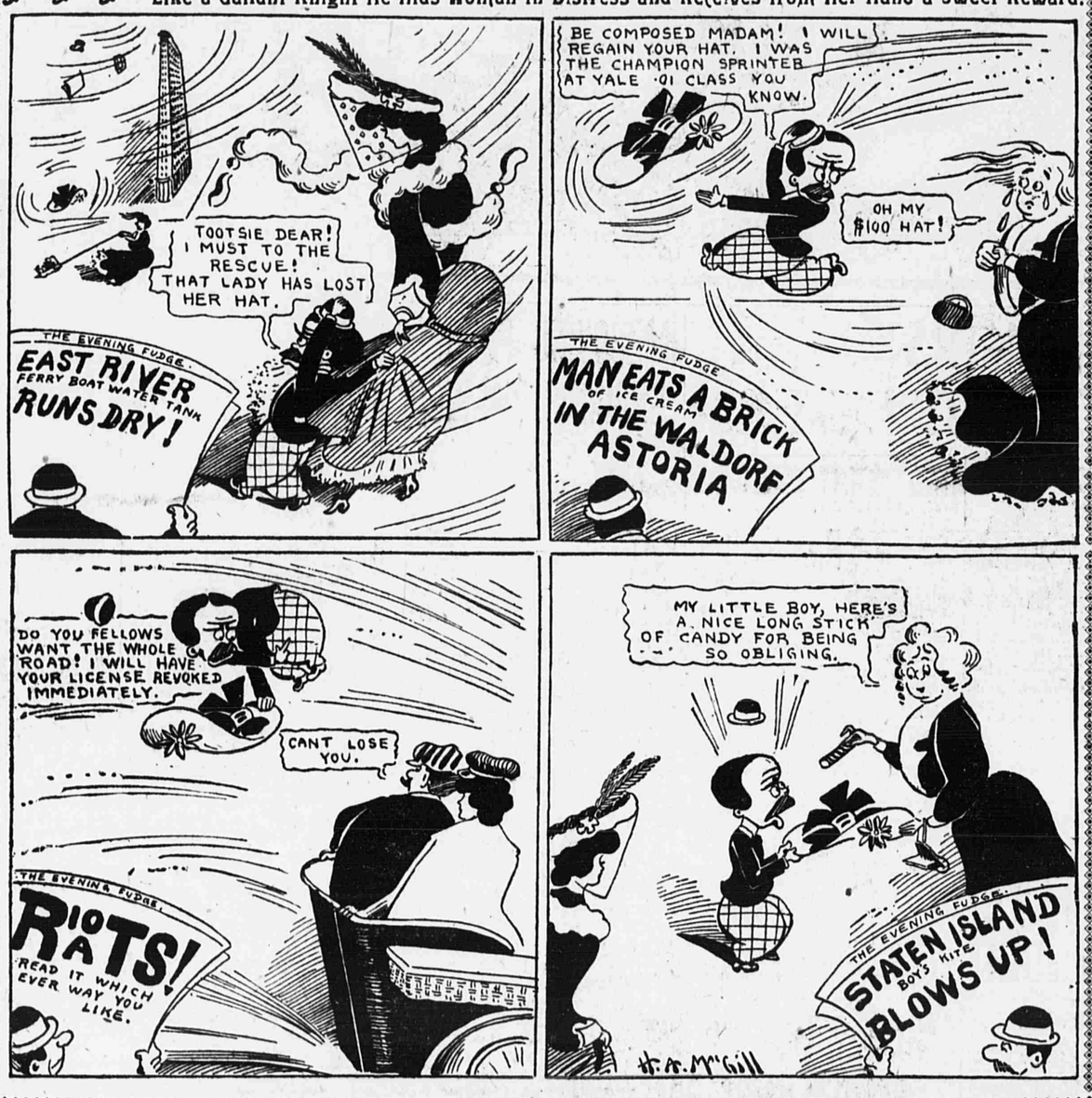
"I love her," says the modern man to his shaving mirror. "I will love her forever—or as long as it seems mutually agreeable."

"I love him," confesses the modern maiden to her midnight pillow. "I will love him forever—or as long as he loves me. No, perhaps I had better stop a little before him. It would be more dignified."

So their loves are born and so they die, and sometimes only the tear of the Recording Angel blots them out, and sometimes his more modern prototype, the court stenographer, preserves them. And, perhaps, from motives of economy, men now pledge the new love in the same bottle of champagne that drowns the memory of the old.

The Importance of Mr. Peewee, the Great Little Man.

Like a Gallant Knight He Aids Woman in Distress and Receives from Her Hand a Sweet Reward.



The Man Higher Up

The "Glad-Rag" Grafter of the Tenderloin.

"THEY don't seem to be gaining much ground on that young duck that took the alias of Goelet and tried to ring into the matrimonial stakes with it," said the Cigar Store Man.

"No," replied the Man Higher Up. "He did a quick get-away, and the best the sleuths have been able to do is watch his smoke. Even if he comes back there are plenty left on the eastern edge of the Tenderloin to hold up the pace he set.

"Every once in a while McClusky sends his bulls out to round up the hard-visaged crooks who hang out on Broadway and Seventh avenue, but he overlooks the soft-handed 'con' men who hang around the swell food foundries in Fifth avenue. There are more glad-rag young grafters doing business in the Tenderloin these days than ever before, and they operate as openly as though they had licenses from Mulberry street.

"Go into an upper-register hotel on Fifth avenue any afternoon and you will find a gang of faultlessly attired youths sitting around smoking cigarettes and showing socks that make the rainbow look like a tankful of tar. Half the time you could take the whole bunch by the feet and shake their pockets inside out and there wouldn't any more cash fall on the floor than you can find in an incandescent light bulb. At other times they have the pazaz in bundles that would block the rapid transit tunnel.

"They never work, and they make as good a front when they are broke as when they are upholstered with the long green. How do they get it? From rich suckers.

"It would make the Vanderbilt boys and other gilded youths of the '400' dizzy if they knew how often these Willies use their names to outgeneral a wise guy from the interior who is dazzled by the sights of the town. The swell Tenderloin grafter will sign anybody's name to a check if he's even got a look-in to having it cashed. The check goes back to the confiding geezer who has thought that he was buying wine for an intimate friend of the Vanderbilts, and he becomes deaf and dumb. He wouldn't make a holler for all the phony checks that could be shoved on him, because it would mean that everybody would be wise to him for a come-on.

"Nearly all of the young grafters who make Fifth avenue their headquarters have a scheme. Now and then one of them gets sloughed, and it comes out that his parents are eminently respectable people in Alabama or Illinois or Ohio or some other State remote from the salt air of the ocean. The political drag that these guys can exercise through their folks is something fierce."

"It's a wonder the proprietors of the hotels and restaurants where these thieves hang out wouldn't give them the run," said the Cigar Store Man.

"They would," replied the Man Higher Up, "but the trouble is that you can't tell them from the real thing."

$100 --- The Girl in Black --- $100

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Roderick Van Nostrand, a wealthy young Brooklyn man, is told by Mother Rebekah, a gypsy fortune-teller, that a certain "Girl in Black" is destined to bring him either happiness or death. Rebekah gives him as a talisman a bracelet on which the following sentence is written: "When Victory Shall All Seem Lost, Fate's Blast Will Wreck the Victor's Plans." In this sentence are scattered at random letters which form the name of the girl. When Van Nostrand shall guess the name, Rebekah says, he will win the girl. Van Nostrand meets and loves the Girl in Black, but she demands that he guess her name. She also saves him from death at the hands of a mysterious man who has shadowed him for weeks. Shaun Lovell, Rebekah's grandson, loves Lura Lovell, a gypsy girl, who loves Van Nostrand, and who holds (as a love charm) a tiny waxen image of Roderick. Should this image be destroyed, according to gypsy lore, its original must die.

CHAPTER VI.

Two Love-Letters.

FOR two weeks a bearded, ill-looking man had shadowed Roderick Van Nostrand wherever he went. The man's object apparently was not robbery. For though he often found himself close to Roderick and twice managed to enter the Van Nostrand home, exploring it from top to bottom, he stole nothing. His sole aim seemed to be to study Van Nostrand's every gesture, every mannerism, every trick of speech or intonation of voice.

On the evening following the nocturnal adventure related in the preceding chapter Roderick strolled into the Hamilton Club, where he had an appointment. As he was looking about for the man he had promised to meet he noticed that several members glanced curiously at him and that one or two more appeared to avoid speaking to him.

As he had not, to his knowledge, an enemy in the world, he set this down to his imagination and strove to dismiss the matter from his mind.

As he sat waiting in the club smoking-room an elderly man, one of the Board of Governors, accosted him.

"Mr. Van Nostrand," he said gravely, "I have known you ever since you were a child. Your father is one of my oldest friends. For that reason I am doing my best to prevent the House Committee from taking any action in your case. But"—

"What on earth are you talking about?" asked Roderick amazed.

"I don't wonder that you choose to pretend ignorance. It shows you still have some sense of shame. But it would be more manly to admit your fault, apologize and be careful it doesn't happen again. Young men will be young men, I suppose, but there is such a thing as carrying it too far."

"Will you do me the kindness to explain what you mean?" asked Roderick in despair. "I suppose you're driving at something, but what it is I don't know. Is it a joke, Dr. Sterne?"

"If so it is a costly one to me," said Sterne grimly. "When you came to me last evening in this room, and asked me if I could lend you $500 for a week I did not see that you were drunk and I gave you my check without heel"—

"$500? Last night?" broke in Roderick. "I haven't been in this club-house for a week until to-night. And I never borrowed a dollar in my life."

"The drunkenness was more bearable than the lies with which you are trying to hide it," answered the doctor. "but I"—

"You are an old man, Dr. Sterne," said Van Nostrand, white with anger, "and I do you the credit to suppose you are insane. Otherwise it would be a long day before you recovered from the effects of calling me a liar. I demand an explanation of this."

"So glad you've come, old man!" broke in a stout, puffy youth whom Roderick particularly detested. "When you borrowed $200 from me last evening and promised to pay it back to-night I knew you'd keep your word, but the loan left me pretty near broke and it's good to know you've showed up to pay me."

"To pay you?" echoed Van Nostrand, his head in a whirl.

"Mr. Van Nostrand," said a voice at his shoulder, and a hand was laid on his arm. "I'd like a word with you, please."

The speaker was a tall, military-looking man with an angry red scar across his cheek. He drew Roderick to one side.

"Now," said he, "I'll give you an opportunity to apologize, and when you have done so I'll leave it to your honor—if you have any left—to decide which of us two shall resign from this club, for it is not big enough to hold us both after what occurred last night."

"Wait a second, Dashiel," interrupted Van Nostrand. "I don't know whether I've gone crazy or not. But I do know I wasn't here last night. You are the third man in five minutes who has sprung this line of talk on me. You're one of the best friends I've got. So, for the sake of old friendship, I ask you to tell me what you're talking about."

"I was right then," mused Dashiel; "you were drunk, and pretty drunk at that, if you don't remember anything that happened. You came in here a little before 9 o'clock, borrowed money from every one who would lend it to you—myself included—and grew so offensive in your manner to poor old Halstead because he wouldn't lend you $100 that I saw you must be drunk and I tried to get you to go home. You struck me across the face. Then you stamped out, saying you were going to call on Miss Haynes. Because you were my friend and because you were drunk, I didn't resent the blow or the use of a lady's name in a place like this, waited for you to sober up. What have you to say?"

"To say? Only that it is a lie from first to last. I did not touch one drop of liquor last night. I was not within a mile of his club-house. I never borrowed money and I am not a drinking man. Nor do I shout ladies' names in public. Either you people are all off your heads, or else this is a huge practical joke. If the latter, it's in rotten taste and I want it stopped."

"You say you weren't here last night?" rejoined Dashiel. "Then where were you?"

Van Nostrand opened his mouth to reply. Then the memory of his promise flashed across his mind. He flushed scarlet.

"I—I cannot say," he muttered.

"It would have been more honest to tell the truth and confess the whole thing," said Dashiel coldly as he turned away.

Half crazed, Van Nostrand hurried out of the club, fearing to meet more men who would disbelieve him, and utterly bewildered by the strange events of the evening.

His last vestige of comprehension vanished as he reached home. There he found two notes awaiting him. He tore open the first. It read:

Dearest: It is all so sudden, so beautiful that I can hardly understand it. All I know or care is that I love you, and that you love me. For you do love me. You said so over and over again last evening. Thank you a thousand times for showing your trust in me then by telling me all your financial troubles and letting me help relieve your straits. The $150 you so reluctantly let me lend you after telling me of the bill you had to meet to-day could not have been spent in any other way that would have given me one-tenth as much pleasure. Please believe that, darling. It was so splendid and brave of you to ask me to let you have the money. It showed you loved and trusted me. And that is all I want in life. But why didn't you call this afternoon or this evening, as you said you would? I've waited for you, oh, so eagerly! Yours (all, ALL yours), dear,

MIRIAM.

Roderick Van Nostrand read, reread and then read again this tender epistle. Then he buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud:

"Oh, I'm insane! Mad as a hatter! I haven't seen Miriam Haynes since the dance at the Pouch Mansion. Yet it seems I called on her last night and proposed to her and—and borrowed money of her, I—I, a white man, sank so low as to borrow money of a woman! What on earth am I coming to? Did I go there in my sleep?"

He picked up the second note. It was in a square envelope addressed in a severely masculine hand.

"Kate Clark," he mused, as he tore it open. "What does she want, I wonder?"

Then he gasped, for out of the envelope fell a check for $1,000. He read the letter that accompanied it:

Dear Old Boy: The $500 I gave you this afternoon wasn't anywhere near enough, I know. So I send a bit more, to put you on Easy street till your next rents come in. What a brick you were to come to me with your money bothers and to ask me so frankly to help you out. As long as Kate Clark has a dollar left in the world, that dollar's at the disposal of the dearest boy that ever happened. How prettily you propose! One would think you'd had a whole lot of practise, and yet I know you haven't. Did you really think I'd refuse you? Some day, long, long after we're married, I'll tell you of a magic spell I employed to win you. But not yet. You'll only laugh at it anyhow. But the spell worked. I haven't been so happy since papa beat McSlade for leader. You asked me to name the day. Of course, I will. How about the 1st of next month? There's no use in waiting. And, unless I hear from you to the contrary, shall I announce the engagement to-morrow? Drop around as early to-morrow as you can. With lots of love. KATE.

"Great heavens!" roared Van Nostrand. "Am I getting to be a Mormon or what? How many more girls have I engaged myself to or borrowed money from? Did I really do all these things, and was that heavenly hour in the park all a dream?

Then, as his eye fell on the bracelet lying in an open drawer of his dressing-table, he seized it and flung it on the floor.

"It's that witch's magic that's possessed me!" he cried in fury. "It's what I get for dabling in necromancy!"

"No," said a voice almost in his ear, "I think not."

Van Nostrand sprang to his feet. At sight of his visitor all color left his face.

(To Be Continued.)

The blank for insertion of the misspelled and corrected words and the missing letters of The Girl in Black's Name will be printed again in Monday's Evening World. It is omitted to-day on account of lack of space.